

ST. LOUIS, MO.  
GLOBE-DEMOCRAT

MORNING - 292,789  
WEEKEND - 306,839

JAN 30 1974

## THE ENSLAVED

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Soviet Communist Party boss Leonid Brezhnev is now visiting one of his subservient client states, Cuba, to discuss strategy for the Western Hemisphere. Press reports indicate he was greeted by "1,000,000 cheering Cubans."

If Brezhnev derived any satisfaction from this organized welcome, it must have been the same vicarious pleasure Hitler received from visiting "cheering" Buchenwald or Scipio had visiting "cheering" Carthage. For Cuba is as enslaved as Buchenwald and as wasted as Carthage, and it is the massive support of the Soviets which makes it possible.

But Brezhnev doesn't have to go to Cuba to see how automatons operate. The horrors of Soviet labor camps, recently spotlighted by the publication of Alexander Solzhenitsyn's book, "The Gulag Archipelago: 1918-1956," may seem to some to be experiences out of the dim past, a relic of Joseph Stalin's era long expurgated by his less repressive successors. Not so.

Bernard Gwertzman in the New York Times notes that Western experts believe more than one million Soviet citizens, including about 10,000 political prisoners, remain in captivity today in a network of about 500 prisons and labor camps throughout the country. The figure has remained constant since the mid-1950s, when dissident Solzhenitsyn ended his account.

Furthermore, the Central Intelligence Agency, through the use of satellite photographs, puts the prison population at 2.4 million to 2.5 million.

Admittedly, many of the prisoners have committed "normal" criminal offenses such as murder, robbery and so forth. But one million to 2½ million? Since the Soviet Union has refused since the late 1920s to release information about its crime rate or prison system, the West must depend wholly upon word leaked by survivors, such as Solzhenitsyn. And that word is of forced labor for saying the wrong thing, of torture, of starvation, and of other brutalities.

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In an accompanying article in the Times, Hedrick Smith discussed the medieval Soviet criminal and security systems. Although there is less of the arbitrary terror of the Stalinist purge era, there is just as much penalty today for stepping out of line. "Today people pretty well know when they are taking a risk," one Soviet writer was quoted. "If you mind your own business, just follow your career, keep quiet and say what is expected of you, you can keep out of trouble. Under Stalin, even that kind of conformity did not guarantee you safety."

The Soviet government can impose non-

judicial punishment at any time, such as dismissal from jobs, expulsion from organizations, and bureaucratic harassment. The Soviet criminal code contains no protection for defendants such as writs of habeas corpus or guarantees against self-incrimination. Persons can be held incommunicado for investigation for nine months, and extensions can be granted. Lawyers can see defendants only after the investigation is concluded.

The court can and does reject witnesses, and there is strong pressure from the secret police to cooperate with the state. The trials are closed to all but the closest relatives of the defendant. The cases are open and shut, consisting almost entirely of the prosecutor's presentation, with automatic findings of guilt. The judge almost always accepts the sentence suggested by the state. Sometimes defense attorneys do not meet the accused.

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It is particularly ludicrous that the official Red Chinese press agency, Hsinhua, has criticized the Soviets for their repression. Solzhenitsyn offers the conservative estimate that 20 million Russians were killed to maintain Communism there. But Western estimates of the number who perished under Chinese Communism vary from 34 million to 63 million. The estimate of those killed in maintaining North Vietnamese Communist control within the North range up to 500,000, by the way.

The Chinese have their own dissident intellectuals, like Bao Ruowang who wrote in "Prisoner of Mao" that 20 million Chinese are living in forced labor camps (Stalin at his peak imprisoned 12 million at a time). Bao had been in nine of the camps — eight of them were bestial, and the ninth was a model prison shown to the Jano Fonda type of visitors who could spread the glories of what they had been pabulum-fed.

The incredible repressions of the Communist dictatorships should give pause to American "dissidents." With all the talk about "enemy lists," "free speech," "the chilling (a currently popular word) effect" of the obscenity ruling or whatever on such-and-such, where has one American suffered in any way?

The fact is, most of the hoopla is hokey. The United States is by far the freest and most open large society on earth. The Soviets and Red Chinese are by far the most repressive and closed. In our idealism, we sometimes are willing to think the best of these oppressive nations. It could be a fatal flaw to ignore what Solzhenitsyn and Bao Ruowang and others tell us. What totalitarians will do to their own, they certainly would not hesitate to do to others if given the chance.